

# The Good Fight of the Faith

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[ 0 : 00 ] Six celebrity pastors who practice in the city that is appropriately known as the City of Angels. In addition to the preachers work in their community and with their parishioners, the show highlights the dynamic lives the men lead, ran away from the pulpit, including the struggles they face as husbands, fathers, and friends.

The women who stand behind the church leaders are also featured. The cast includes Bishop Noel Jones, the brother of singer Grace Jones, who leads a church full of celebrities.

The Reverend Dietrich Haddon, who is the son of a bishop and an evangelist, and has been preaching since the age of 11, and conducted the church's choir at 13.

And Bishop Ron Gibson, who joined a gang by the age of 16, and eventually turned his life around to start a small church that has grown to a congregation of about 4,000 members.

So that's essentially what the show is about. One of the cast members who is not mentioned is Clarence McClendon, who became famous a number of years ago for forcing his first wife to divorce him because according to him it would look bad on his ministry if he divorced her.

[ 1 : 28 ] He wanted out of the marriage but didn't want to do that. And then he turned around and married another woman seven days later and with a straight face said that he did not commit adultery.

Oxygen Networks, the producer of Preachers of L.A., said that they have a strategy to duplicate this reality show in multiple cities and they've started to do that.

They've now brought Preachers of Detroit started this year. And the only difference between Preachers of Detroit and Preachers of L.A. really are the faces.

It's the same theme focusing on the same things. And there are plans in the making for Preachers of Atlanta. Now when you look at these video clips on YouTube or you look at the online images, when you do a Google search and you search Preachers of L.A.

and you see the images that come up or even Preachers of Detroit, it doesn't take long to help you to see what the focus is all about.

[ 2 : 39 ] It's about celebrity status and flamboyant lifestyles, designer clothes and luxury cars and big money. It's about showing how if you are popular enough and your church is large enough, you don't have to live by God's Word.

And your sins will be excused. And your church can even grow despite the fact that you flagrantly violate and disobey the Word of God.

It's about being slick and pleasing the crowd and not about being holy and pleasing God. And yet, these reality shows, I'm told, are popular with some who profess to know Christ.

And that, brothers and sisters, I find more shocking than the content of those reality shows.

And here's why I find it shocking. I find it shocking because what many Christians are drawn to in Preachers of L.A., the Bible warns us to flee. What they're attracted to, the allure and the grandeur and the glitz and the glamour of these individuals' lives, is the very thing that Scripture warns us, and even, I would say, commands us, to flee from.

[ 4 : 10 ] And this morning, I don't share this as a personal opinion. Instead, I share it as a biblical conviction. And as we come to this passage before us in 1 Timothy, in our series in 1 Timothy, I believe you will see that the conviction that I'm holding out to you is grounded in this passage of Scripture as well as elsewhere, but in particular, in this passage of Scripture that is before us.

So if you have not yet done so, please turn in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 6. We'll be continuing our series. We left off last week at verse 10. We will continue this morning, starting in verse 11.

1 Timothy chapter 6. We'll be reading verses 11 through 16. Paul writes to Timothy, But as for you, O man of God, flee these things.

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Jesus Christ who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time.

[ 6 : 04 ] He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the king of kings and lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honor and glory, eternal dominion. Amen. To him be honor and eternal dominion.

Amen. Let's pray together. Dear Lord, we thank you this morning for the privilege we have to gather and to sit under the authority of your word.

We thank you for your word, Lord. You use your word to build your church and I pray that in this moment you'd build your church through the preaching of your word.

Lord, we ask this morning that you would help us to have hearts that are postured for the truth.

Would you enable our hearts, Lord, to be good soil, to receive the engrafted word of God, Rabbi, we might grow.

[ 7 : 17 ] Father, I ask that you would pour out abundant grace upon me that I would be faithful to stay within the four corners of your word. Lord, even as we approach this passage that a significant portion addresses you, I ask, O Lord, for the grace to be able to impart lofty truths about who you are, lofty truths about your attributes that we are not able to fully apprehend and comprehend.

Father God, would you in this moment do your work among us. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. our text this morning begins with the words, but as for you, but as for you, and what these words do is they clue us into the fact that the Apostle Paul is referencing something that he had said earlier, and he is distinguishing Timothy from it.

He's referencing something, but he's distinguishing Timothy from it, and clearly what Paul is referencing is 1 Timothy chapter 6 verses 3 through 10.

We heard a portion of it last week in the message that David so faithfully brought to us. But in the whole passage from verse 3, what Paul does is he addresses this issue of false teachers and their false teaching.

[ 8 : 59 ] And if you would just follow with me for a moment, I want to read it again in our hearing, starting in verse 3. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.

He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth.

Imagining that godliness is a means of gain, but godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world.

but if we have food and clothing with these, we will be content. For those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. it is through this craving that some have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many kinds.

[ 10 : 26 ] So what we see in these verses, the Apostle Paul is contrasting what he has already addressed in verses 3-10 with what he is now going to say in verses 11-16.

he addresses Timothy and he is showing this stark contrast between Timothy and the false teachers and their false teaching and he addresses Timothy as a man of God.

He says in verse 11, but as for you, O man of God, and he goes on to address Timothy. Now what is very obvious about this passage before us is that Paul is addressing Timothy.

But what is not obvious and we can easily miss is that Paul is not only addressing Timothy. Paul by extension is addressing all who claim Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Now certainly what he says to Timothy applies to Timothy in a primary way and to elders like Timothy in a primary way, in a significant way, but it also applies to believers in general.

[ 11 : 40 ] And it would be an interpretational error to believe that Paul is only saying these things to Timothy. Timothy, you're to live this way and then the rest of God's people are exempt from it.

So brothers and sisters, even though we find in this passage this morning, but as for you, O man of God, let's hear this morning that we are all being addressed from God's word.

God. And so here's what Paul is saying to Timothy and to all of God's people in these six verses. Here's what he's saying. He's saying mindful of God and the return of Christ, live a life that flees sin and pursues righteousness.

Mindful of God and the return of Jesus Christ, live a life that flees sin and pursues righteousness.

As Paul gives these instructions, there are two realities that come out about the Christian faith.

Two realities that stand out in a very strong and vivid way from these six verses concerning the Christian faith. And in our remaining time, I want to consider each of them.

[ 12 : 53 ] The first reality of the Christian faith that Paul reminds us of is the fight of the Christian faith. The fight of the Christian faith.

Paul reminds us that the Christian faith is a spiritual fight and believers are called to fight. And this fight entails fleeing sin and pursuing righteousness.

And here, Timothy and all believers by extension are called to flee sin and the particular sins that we have in view that Paul is addressing that seem to have been unique to the church at Ephesus. We're being warned about this sinful belief that we serve God for things, that godliness is a means to gain.

We're being warned against being discontent with what we have and desiring to be rich and loving money. These are warnings that are being given to God's people.

[ 13 : 58 ] Now, obviously, the list is not exhaustive. It's not a complete list of all the things that we are to fight. It's not a complete list of all the things we are to flee. But I believe it's important for us to see that this first aspect of fighting in the Christian faith, this fight of the Christian faith, is that it entails fleeing.

it entails a running away from particular things. It means that we are not to cozy up to sin or to become comfortable with sin. We are to flee from sin.

That's the point that Paul is making when he says to Timothy, he says, Timothy, as for you, you are to flee these things. And I think for some of us, we oftentimes think that we are okay to see how close we can come to the edge of a situation and not be affected by it.

But that's what Paul is saying to Timothy. He's saying to Timothy, and by extension to all of us, you are to flee from these things. But there's another aspect of the fight that Paul addresses.

And it is not just fleeing from sin, but is also pursuing righteousness. And we see that in verse 11 as well. And Paul lists some of what we are to be pursuing, what we are to be going after, what we are to be pressing behind.

[ 15 : 30 ] He says, in a nutshell, we are to be pursuing the things of God. And here again, the list is not exhaustive. There are many things in the Christian life that we are to be pursuing, but what he does is he lists six of them.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of all the things that Paul could have written, he writes these particular ones, in this particular situation, and in the providence of God, we are hearing it this morning, that we have to be pursuing these particular things.

Now, when you consider the six things that Paul says that we have to be pursuing, I think you're able to see that you can actually group them into twos. You can group them into pairs.

And so the first two that he calls us to pursue are righteousness and godliness. And this speaks about how we live. Righteousness, at least the righteousness that Paul has in view, is not the positional righteousness that we have before God, where he declares us justified, where he declares us righteous in his sight.

That's not what Paul is calling us to pursue. We have that. And that is settled in Jesus Christ. What he is calling us to pursue is not so much this positional righteousness, but this practical righteousness in terms of how we live, this righteous living.

[ 16 : 59 ] That is in keeping with us standing before God. In essence, what he is saying is you have this positional righteousness with God. He declares you righteous. You are now to pursue righteousness in terms of how you live.

And he also says we are to pursue godliness. Godliness speaks about having a life that reflects that we belong to God. We are marked by that which identifies us as belonging to God.

And I think when we consider this brothers and sisters, the godliness that we are being called to pursue is contrary to worldliness. Godliness. I mean, you consider this reality show, this Preachers of LA reality show, I can tell you that when you watch a little bit of it, you realize that the individuals were not chosen for godliness.

That was not a criteria. They were chosen more for worldliness and for flamboyance and for glitz and glamour that attracts the eyes of a dying world.

You see, godliness does not resonate with the world that is in rebellion against God, but worldliness does. Godliness will not cause record TV ratings to be the portion of any particular TV show.

[ 18 : 24 ] People will not be glued to their screens to watch godliness. They are glued to their screens to watch that which they can identify with, that which is so near to who they are and how they live.

Paul says we are to pursue godliness. In addition to righteousness, he says, God's people are to pursue godliness. Second, he says that we are to pursue faith and love.

As we live in this world, we are to pursue faith and love. And what we find is, when you look at the writings of the apostle Paul, he would often pair these two virtues together, faith and love.

And Paul says to Timothy, and he says to us, that we are to pursue these things. We are to pursue faith in God. And faith in God is directly trans, or compared to, what we actually see him telling us to flee in the earlier verses.

faith in God is contrasted with those who don't trust in God to meet their needs. Those who love money because they believe that in money there is security.

[ 19 : 45 ] Those who run after things, believing that their lives consist in the abundance of their possessions. And what Paul says, he says, no, you are to pursue faith. That's faith in God, believing in him, trusting in him to take care of us and to take care of our families.

So we would avoid discontentment. So we would avoid lust and greed and covetousness for things that God in his providence has not allowed us to have in the moment.

Faith in God is to be able to trust in God when things just don't seem right and they aren't as we would want them to be. Paul says, Timothy, you are to flee those things, but you are to pursue faith in God.

And he says you are to also pursue love. And first of all, that's love for God. But it also is love for our fellow man. We learn so much about our love for God by our love for our fellow man.

Scripture says if you do not know how to love your brother who you can see, how can you say that you love God who you cannot see? And so we are called to pursue love and this love will be lived out and demonstrated by how we relate to our fellow man, how we relate to other people.

[ 21 : 11 ] I don't think it takes a lot of imagination to consider that this life that Paul is calling Timothy and calling us to flee from has little regard for other people, has little regard for their value, has little regard for their dignity and they would walk on them and they would use them.

to achieve whatever end they want. That life that he tells us to flee from is a life that is about selfishness and self centeredness and only what I need and not considering the interests of other people.

But Paul says instead no, he says Timothy you are to pursue faith and you are to pursue love. Love for God and love for a fellow man.

And then third he says you are to pursue steadfastness and gentleness. This was certainly very relevant for Timothy because Timothy's assignment was to remain in Ephesus and to deal with false doctrines and to deal with those who were teaching those false doctrines.

so he was called to correct. He was called to this difficult task of having sometimes to confront people.

[ 22 : 29 ] He was called to this difficult task of watching people veer away from the faith and leave the faith. And Paul says to Timothy, he says, Timothy you need to be steadfast. in the midst of all the pressures and in the midst of all the difficulties, in the midst of all the trials that you may go through.

Timothy, you are to remain steadfast even when you don't fully understand all that's going on.

Pursue steadfastness, Timothy. And then he is to pursue gentleness because part of our spiritual fight does involve engaging people.

And even when we have to correct and confront others, we are called to be gentle. So gentleness as well is to be pursued.

Now, as I said, this list could be longer. Paul could have added other things that we could have pursued. How do we go about this? Are we to be thinking, well, I'm going to go after this particular thing and that particular thing and so forth?

What is the means that God has given to us to be able to pursue these particular virtues in the Christian life? Or the means of the ordinary means of grace?

[ 23 : 47 ] The means that God has given to us, they're not some earth-shaking super-spiritual activity that we need to be pursuing. No, they are the ordinary means of grace that God has given to us as the people of God.

They are the ordinary resources and activities of the Christian life. The Word of God, both our personal study of it and our corporate sitting under it as we're doing this morning.

Prayer, both personal prayer and corporate prayer. fasting, fellowship with brothers and sisters, fellowship with believers who will spur us on to good works and who will spur us on to godliness as well.

And sometimes this entails admonition, sometimes this entails warning, sometimes it entails correction, but this is how we pursue these things. This is how we go after these things, through the ordinary means of grace that God has given to us, that as we avail ourselves of them, we will find ourselves pursuing these particular things.

And certainly the work of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit working in our lives, giving us desires, giving us motivations, convicting us where he needs to convict us, and calling us to pursue these virtues.

[ 25 : 13 ] Now when we consider fleeing sin and the sins that Paul tells us that we are to flee, and pursuing righteousness or the things of God, it's easy to think that they are disconnected or they are very separate activities, but they are very much connected.

They are connected activities, because when you think about it, we cannot truly flee sin if we do not pursue righteousness. Can't truly do it.

If you are truly fleeing sin, built into that is a desire to pursue righteousness. And we cannot truly pursue righteousness if we are not truly fleeing sin.

And so there needs to be this awareness in our hearts that this is what we are called to. Now in verse 12, Paul encapsulates what he is calling Timothy and the rest of us to when he says using the language of warfare, he says, fight the good fight of the faith.

Now again, this is a spiritual fight, but it is not a passive fight. In the original language, the word for fight that Paul uses in the Greek, we get our word agony from it.

[ 26 : 35 ] fight. And it means to exert oneself. It means to engage oneself and to exert oneself in a particular effort or in a particular pursuit.

So we see that this is an active pursuit and not a passive pursuit. Paul says fight the good fight of the faith. And certainly this for church leaders would include a doctrinal fight.

fighting for the truth, standing for the truth. And this was especially true in Timothy's day where the church was riddled with false doctrine and the church was being affected by false teachers.

But today it's no different. Today we are similarly being affected by false doctrine and false teachers and we are called in our various capacities and to different degrees to stand for the truth of God's word.

We're called to stand for the truth of the word of God. And you see this is why the debate about homosexual marriage is not just primarily a political debate.

[ 27 : 50 ] It is a biblical debate. This is why the issue of abortion and the issue of assisted suicide, this is why these are not just political issues, these are biblical issues because they get to the very heart of the image of God and what God says is right and God's created order as he has revealed in his word.

And brothers and sisters, if we are named by the name of Jesus Christ, we are called to fight for the truth. We are called to stand for the truth that is revealed in God's word.

And as in any battle, we are called to exercise the appropriate wisdom and strategy as we engage in the fight, both in the church and in the world.

Notice again in verse 12 that the apostle Paul, as part of the fight, tells Timothy, Timothy, you are to take hold of the eternal life to which you have been called, and about which you have made a good

confession in the presence of many witnesses.

He says, Timothy, take hold of it. You can see this. This is an active engagement and he says, Timothy, you need to take hold of it as a part of your fleeing and as a part of your pursuit, your fleeing of sin, your pursuit of righteousness.

[ 29 : 17 ] And the first thing we see from these words of Paul calling Timothy to take hold of the eternal life to which he has been called, is that eternal life is not just a future thing.

It is not just something that awaits us on the day we die or on the day that the Lord comes and eternal life just rushes into our lives. No, he says to Timothy, he says, Timothy, you can lay a hold of eternal life even now, not in its full measure, not in totality, but there is an aspect of laying hold of that eternal life that God has given to us.

There is an aspect of appropriating that now and allowing that to make a difference in this fight that we have been called to. In a sense what Paul is saying to Timothy and he is saying to all believers is that it is not enough to have just a confession of faith.

It is not enough just to say, oh that day, back then, I made a decision to follow Jesus Christ. Paul says no. He says there needs to be an appropriation and a bringing into the present of that eternal life to which you have been called.

There needs to be some tangible evidence of that, he seems to be saying to Timothy, that you need to draw upon and you need to bring into the present.

[ 30 : 49 ] And see brothers and sisters, think about this. When you and I live with this awareness that we have eternal life, it changes how we live. We have eternal life.

That is something that can never and will never be taken away from us. And therefore we fight differently, we engage differently because we have been given eternal life.

Paul says Timothy appropriated hold on to it. It's going to help you as you fight. It's going to make a difference in your attitude as you engage in this spiritual fight.

You have been given eternal life. That is true for every single one of us this morning who have trusted in Jesus Christ. No matter what you're going through, no matter what hard and difficult circumstances you face, you are called to lay hold on that eternal life to which you have been called.

And friends, when we do, nothing in this temporal life becomes precious to us. Not even our own lives, not even this biological life that we live because we realize that the worst thing happens to us if we were to die.

[ 32 : 03 ] God has given us eternal life and we have to appropriate that eternal life even now.

In addition to calling Timothy to lay a hold of this eternal life, Paul also helps us to see that this eternal life has been graciously given to us.

this eternal life that we have received, we have been called to it, he says. He says, you have been called to this.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. We didn't just wake up one day because we were wise and holy and decide that we are going to serve Jesus Christ.

No, Paul says, you were called to this, this gracious calling of God. The theologians call this a factual calling that God irresistibly draws sinners to himself.

[ 33 : 08 ] Paul says to Timothy and he says to us, he says, you have been called to this eternal life by the mercy and by the grace of God.

I think some of us in the western world oftentimes are puzzled by jihadists and suicide bombers who would knowingly strap themselves with a bomb and walk into a crowd knowing that they will die.

As a matter of fact, they have a greater certainty of knowing that they will die even if people are just injured. And we sometimes wonder why do they do that? Well, I'll tell you why they do that.

They do that because they are convinced in their minds of what they've been told. Even though it's wrong as we understand it and as it is in the truth, they are so convinced of it, they are so persuaded by it that it enables them to live in a particular way where their life is not precious to them.

And see, brothers and sisters, I believe that this is what Paul is driving at as he calls Timothy, he calls us to fight the good fight of faith, to lay a hold of this eternal life, to have this awareness of what God has given to us and to what we have been called and that it would make a difference in our lives.

[ 34 : 40 ] And guess what? We're not called to die, though we may die, though it may come to that. We are called to live for him. We are called to stand for him and to live faithfully for God.

in this world. And the more we become persuaded of this, I believe in a similar way our lives will not be precious to us in terms of shrinking back from sacrificing and serving God in the different ways that he calls us to serve him.

Towards the end of verse 12, the apostle Paul refers to the good confession that Timothy made about the eternal life to which he was called in the presence of many witnesses.

And we're not sure of the occasion. It could have been at his baptism. It could have been at his ordination. But Paul is reminding Timothy that what he is now, that what he is now to be about, that it is to be consistent with that confession that he made in the presence of those witnesses.

He is bringing that to bear for Timothy. He's reminding Timothy that he's saying, Timothy, you made a good confession. You made the good confession before many witnesses.

[ 36 : 06 ] And this good confession that he refers to, Paul again refers to it in verse 13 when he refers to Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate also made the good confession.

confession. And I think we have a better understanding of what Timothy was being reminded of when we consider what Jesus did before Pontius Pilate. What Jesus did before Pontius Pilate was that under the threat of death, he confessed that he was a king before Pontius Pilate.

He confessed that he had a kingdom and that his kingdom was not of this world. And he did that facing certain death. And Paul is reminding Timothy, saying, Timothy, you made a good confession. Maybe this was the confession of the lordship of Jesus Christ, that Jesus was the king. And to make that confession the day that Paul and Timothy lived was to take your life in your hands because there was only one king and that king was Caesar.

And to say there was another king was to be treasonous. And one was not being loyal to Caesar. and that was worthy of death. Paul is in essence reminding Timothy, Timothy, you made the good confession where you laid your life on the line.

[ 37 : 30 ] The presence of many witnesses that you would live, that you would stand, that you would fight for this king and for his kingdom. And Timothy, now I call you to fight the good fight of the faith.

Reminding him and inspiring him to do that. So Timothy is being essentially called to continue to hold on to the good confession and to live it out as part of fighting the good fight of the faith.

Mindful of the many witnesses who were present when he made that initial confession. Christians. And to those of you who have trusted in Jesus Christ, let me ask you a couple of questions this morning.

How aware are you that you have been called to this fight of faith? how aware are you that when you committed to Christ, when you chose to follow Christ, that you were actually committing to engage in a spiritual battle, in a spiritual fight?

And a fight that actively flees from sin and pursues righteousness. And what does fleeing from sin look like in your life?

[ 38 : 57 ] And can you honestly say that is your attitude to sin? That you will flee from sin? And the scripture says we are to flee the very appearance of evil. Or sin, something that we tend to be a bit more comfortable with and a bit more cozy with.

And we don't have this attitude of fleeing and running from, of not even being associated with, not even being connected to as much as we possibly can.

And then what about righteousness? Do you pursue righteousness using the means of grace that God has given to us?

And then in this world where holding the truth is becoming more and more costly every day, are you willing to stand and to fight for the truths in God's word in this world that is becoming increasingly hostile towards those who stand for the truth?

We need to consider those because they're all a part of this call to fight the good fight of the faith. faith. Well, that's the first reality of the Christian faith that Paul reminds us of in this passage, the fight of the Christian faith.

[ 40 : 28 ] The second is the God of the Christian faith. The God of the Christian faith. Notice in verse 13 that Paul adds to the solemnness of his charge to Timothy by reminding Timothy that he was not just calling him to bring to mind the many witnesses who were present when he made the good confession, but he reminds Timothy now that this charge that he is giving to him, that he is

giving him this charge in the very presence of God himself, the creator, the one who gives life to all things, the creator, and of Jesus Christ himself who made the good confession before Pilate and thereby left all of us an example of being faithful to the truth even under the very threat and sentence of death.

Paul is reminding Timothy, in essence, he's saying, Timothy, though I've reminded you of the great number of witnesses who were present when you made your good confession, Timothy, understand that I am charging you now in the very presence of God and of Jesus Christ, the one who is our example in the good confession.

So he's reminding Timothy of in this particular verse. And I believe all of us know this morning that serving God away from the threat of loss of life or livelihood is very different from serving God when it could cost us our very lives.

But in Paul's day, there was a price to be paid. And I would venture to say that increasingly in our day we will see this.

If the Lord delays this coming, I believe that we will see more and more, even in our lifetimes, that those who serve Christ faithfully will pay a price to do so.

[ 42 : 47 ] We'll be faced with the choice of being faithful and suffering or being unfaithful and avoiding suffering. and really now is the time that we need to ask the Lord for the grace and for the strength to have resolve and have conviction about these things, that we would be willing to stand and willing to fight for the faith.

The time to do that is not the day of trial and testing. It's not the day when the pressures are mounting. We don't want to be trying to find conviction then. No, we need to be asking God to give us conviction now that we would be able to stand, to give us conviction that we would be like the martyrs of years gone by, who would willingly be burned at a stake before they would recant, before they would deny the truths that they held to.

Notice also in verse 14 that the apostle Paul says to Timothy that he is to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of Jesus Christ.

He is to keep it unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Commentators disagree on exactly what Paul is referring to by the commandment because we see that he obviously is giving him multiple commands and so some would disagree on exactly what Paul is getting at there.

But here's what is clear. Whatever the commandment means, what is clear is this. Paul is calling Timothy to be faithful. And by extension he is calling all believers to be faithful to the very end.

[ 44 : 41 ] To the end of our lives on this earth or to the end of this world at the coming of Jesus Christ. And here we see that Paul is doing more than just giving a historical marker.

He's doing more than just saying this is when you are to this is you to be faithful up until that end.

No, he's doing something else. What he's doing is he is reminding us of one of the most important truths and realities and appointments that lie before us as a people and is the day of judgment.

In reminding us about the return of Jesus Christ Paul is also reminding us of the day of judgment of the day when you and I will stand before God and we will be judged by the man that he is appointed by Jesus Christ.

He's reminding us that the return of Jesus Christ is not pie in the sky but it is a certain reality that he says God will bring to pass at the proper time.

He will display the appearing of Christ at the proper time. The time that he determines to be proper. He will display him at the proper time.

[ 46 : 05 ] God will bring it to pass and Timothy and all of God's people are to be faithful to that day serving Christ without reproach and without stain.

And this is in direct contrast to the situation that Timothy faced in Ephesus where there were many who had wandered from the faith. There were many who did not hold the commandment without stain and without reproach.

And they had now repudiated the faith that they once claimed to profess. notice in verse 15 that Paul reminds Timothy and he reminds us of the God of the Christian faith.

He reminds us of this God for whom we live life and this God with whom we have to do. And then he can't help once he references God he can't help but break into a doxology into a praise of God.

And this would be the second time that we see Paul doing this in this letter. If you turn over to chapter 1 and verse 17 you'll see in a very similar way that Paul references God and he says in

verse 17 to the king of the ages immortal invisible the only God be honor and glory forever and ever amen.

[ 47 : 37 ] Very similar language very similar praise. So this is the second doxology that we come across in this letter and what we see is that Paul brings us face to face with the God of the Christian faith.

He brings us face to face with this God before whom we live and this God whom we serve and who will enable us to fight the good fight of the faith. this is to motivate us.

This is to remind us that yes we are able to live faithfully because this is the God who is the creator of all who is sovereign over all things.

And notice what he says in verses 15 and 16 he reminds us that God is the only he is the blessed and only sovereign king of kings and lord of lords.

Now I've already said earlier that in the day when these words were penned and these words would have been read in the church at Ephesus it was treasonous to read these words.

[ 48 : 42 ] You took your life into your hands to believe these words and to read these words and really when you think about it you had to be persuaded about this to be able to hold on to this you wouldn't be!

believing this and things and the Lord of Lords. It took a hard conviction to be able to say these words and Paul is reminding Timothy and he's reminding us that this is the truth that in spite of season all of his power in spite of all the threats that we may face in this world and in spite of what this world looks like and how it can be stacked against us at times he's saying to us there is only one sovereign Lord there is only one king of kings and one lord of lords and notice in verse 16 how he reminds us of God's uniqueness he says in verse 16 he alone has immortality and by this he means that God has immortality within himself it is innate to his being he possesses immortality wasn't given to him so we have immortal souls but that was given to us what's interesting about these words is that the

Roman emperors claimed to have immortality as well and so Paul rightly qualifies it when he says in verse 16 who alone has immortality not just God and the Roman emperors but God alone has immortality he is the only one who has foreverness within himself now this doesn't mean that things won't last forever like the earth and the new heavens they'll last forever our souls will last forever that's all because of God's arrangement and God's empowerment that those things should be God alone by his very nature possesses!

immortality glory and that's the God of the Christian faith he tells us also that God dwells in unapproachable light in addition to being immortal he dwells in unapproachable light and what this speaks about is the blinding radiance of God's glory that we are not able to approach we are not able to apprehend it reminds us of the truth that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all no darkness at all it reminds us that though our God exists no one has ever seen him in his full glory no one can ever see him in his full glory that's what he told Moses in Exodus 33 verse 20 you are unable to see me no one can see me and live and so the apostle

Paul rightly concludes as he does to him the honor and eternal dominion amen when I asked you this morning as I close how aware are you that you fight the good fight of faith you are called to fight the good fight of faith in the presence of Jesus and before this powerful God this creator of everything this sovereign ruler of the universe how aware are you that this is the God before whom we are called to live and fight and see brothers and sisters I really believe that if we live with this awareness we live differently!

[ 52 : 52 ] you can't be aware! this sovereign Lord King of Kings Lord of Lords lives in unapproachable light and then we can be cozy with sin and we will not be pursuing righteousness and although Paul doesn't highlight all of the attributes of God in this passage all of his attributes are in view and what we see is this transcendent all powerful all sovereign God who is over every single thing and every single circumstance in our lives and the whole point I believe that Paul has behind it is to call us to something else to call us to something higher than this desertion of the faith that was so prevalent among so many in the city of Ephesus and the church that

Timothy led it's an encouragement for us to fight the good fight of the faith as this God watches over us and as this God cares for us this is the God of the Christian faith and this is why we are called to fight the good fight of the faith for those of you who may be present this morning and you don't know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord this is the God before whom you will one day stand with the rest of us and you will give an account for your life and this God as powerful as he is has shown

mercy by sending his son to die in the place of sinners to take their sin and to die the death that they deserve to die so that anyone who puts his or her faith in him  
God will pardon and God will save I encourage you this morning if you do not know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord obey the gospel repent turn from sin put your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and then you too will be engaged in this fight this good fight of the faith this fight that God watches over and will cause us in the end to be victorious and he will come thank God aren't you glad that it isn't a forever fight it has an end he is going to come and he is going to receive to himself all those who belong to him you see when we're mindful of this God we're not attracted to preachers of LA we're not attracted to all that is thrown out there to attract and to draw people in that stuff pales in the presence of this great  
God and Savior and so my prayer for all of us this morning is that God would give us this compelling vision of this life that he has called us to and this compelling vision of this God before whom we live life and this God whom we serve let's pray together